



**Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources**

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**You may have been hearing about a Chronic Wasting Disease audit, here's what you need to know:** The Legislative Audit Bureau has completed an audit of the state's handling of Chronic Wasting Disease. The department has drafted a response that is available along with a link to the audit at [dnr.wisconsin.gov](http://dnr.wisconsin.gov). The audit examiners interviewed staff and administrators from the Department of Natural Resources; Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection; Department of Health and Human Services and Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory

**What did they conclude?** Although the audit bureau agreed with our approach up to this point saying that, "Without exception, every scientist and researcher with whom we [Legislative Audit Bureau] spoke believed that, given the information available in 2002, Wisconsin's approach to combating CWD was reasonable and appropriate," they also say that, "To date, DNR's efforts to eradicate CWD in the free-free ranging deer population have not been effective." We agree with that conclusion. We haven't made as much progress as we had hoped at this point and in the coming months we will be doing more to involve hunters and landowners in getting us to the goal of a healthy deer herd.

**What has Wisconsin accomplished in the five years since CWD was discovered?**

- Wisconsin knows more about where this disease is and how it is affecting our wild deer herd than most other states or provinces; we've tested more than 100,000 deer, finding 651 positives in wild, free-ranging deer, all in the known CWD infection area in south central and southeastern Wisconsin.
- 14,654 farm-raised deer have been tested during this time allowing deer farms to document the health of their herds and take action where CWD was found.
- Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Lab created a USDA-approved, state-of-the-art CWD testing facility that annually has led the nation in the number of CWD tests it performs
- The state completed a baseline audit of Wisconsin's deer farms and worked with the deer farm industry to implement comprehensive health monitoring regulations
- Wisconsin has built a venison pantry program for the CWD zones so no game is wasted.
- In response to hunters telling us they wanted testing to be sure they were bringing healthy venison to their family dinner tables, DNR has invested almost 50% of money used for CWD in testing hunter harvested deer.
- Wisconsin has invested about an average of about \$5 million on CWD each year in order to preserve the heritage of deer hunting and protect the estimated \$1 billion in economic impact deer hunting pumps into our state economy.
- Public opinion surveys of hunter attitudes in the CWD zones and in other areas of the state consistently show strong (66%) support for controlling CWD and not allowing it to spread.

**What's next?** The Department of Natural Resources is committed to a healthy deer herd; it will take time, it will take effort, and it will take commitment. Last month, in a memo to the Natural Resources Board, Secretary Hassett outlined a three phased approach beginning with demonstrating that CWD can be contained within a limited area of the state, that we can reduce the prevalence or intensity of disease within the affected area, and that if we can demonstrate successful containment and control of CWD,

then Wisconsin should work toward eliminating CWD. In 2007 the DNR will be seeking your opinion and ideas on CWD management into the future. Watch for details.

